

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 2, 3 and 8 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Please amend Claims 1 and 12 and add new Claim 16 as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A storage unit which is detachable from an information processing apparatus having ejecting means for ejecting the storage unit, the storage unit having a storage medium for storing data from the information processing apparatus, comprising:

a controller for controlling storage of data into the storage medium;
receiving means for receiving an eject instruction to eject the storage unit from the information processing apparatus;

judging means for judging whether or not the storage unit is in an ejectable state a recording operation in the storage unit is complete; and

output means for outputting an eject permission signal to the information processing apparatus for ejecting the storage unit by said ejecting means if said judging means judges that the recording operation in the storage unit is complete, wherein said judging means is arranged inside the storage unit in the ejectable state.

2. to 3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously Presented) The unit according to claim 1, wherein said output means uses an extra signal line.

5. (Previously Presented) The unit according to claim 1, wherein said receiving means receives an eject command as the eject instruction.

6. (Previously Presented) The unit according to claim 1, wherein said receiving means receives a status of an operation switch as the eject instruction via an extra signal line.

7. (Previously Presented) The unit according to claim 1, wherein said receiving means further comprises:

switch receiving means for receiving a status of an operation switch; and
notification means for notifying the information processing apparatus of an operation status of the operation switch on the basis of the status of the operation switch that is received by said switch receiving means.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Original) The unit according to claim 6, wherein the operation switch is arranged in the storage unit.

10. (Previously Presented) An information processing apparatus which allows detaching a storage unit defined in claim 1, comprising:
providing means for providing a user interface;

issuing means for issuing the eject instruction to the storage unit in accordance with user operation to the user interface; and
eject means for ejecting the storage unit on the basis of the eject permission signal which is output from the storage unit in accordance with the eject instruction.

11. (Previously Presented) An information processing apparatus which allows detaching a storage unit defined in claim 7, comprising:

monitoring means for inquiring of the storage unit as to a status of the operation switch, and monitoring a status signal representing the status of the operation switch;

issuing means for issuing the eject instruction to the storage unit in accordance with user operation to a user interface provided by software or the status signal; and

eject means for ejecting the storage unit on the basis of the eject permission signal which is output from the storage unit in accordance with the eject instruction.

12. (Currently Amended) An eject control method for a storage unit which is detachable from an information processing apparatus having ejecting means for ejecting the storage unit, the storage unit having a storage medium for storing data from the information processing apparatus, and a controller for controlling storage of data into the storage medium, comprising:

a receiving step of receiving, by the storage unit, an eject instruction to eject the storage unit from the information processing apparatus;

a judging step of judging, by the storage unit, whether or not the storage unit is in an ejectable state a recording operation in the storage unit is complete; and an output step of outputting, from the storage unit, an eject permission signal to the information processing apparatus for ejecting the storage unit by said ejecting means if said judging step judges that the recording operation in the storage unit is complete, in the ejectable state.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Previously Presented) A housing apparatus which allows detaching a storage unit defined in claim 1, and which can be connected to an information processing apparatus, comprising:

an interface which realizes data communication between the storage unit and the information processing apparatus;
transmission means for transmitting the eject instruction from the information processing apparatus to the storage unit; and
an eject mechanism which ejects the storage unit in accordance with the eject permission signal from the storage unit.

15. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the apparatus further comprises:

an eject designation switch,

wherein said transmission means transmits the eject instruction to the storage unit in accordance with operation of said eject designation switch.

16. (New) The unit according to claim 1, wherein said receiving means, after reception of the eject instruction, ignores a subsequent ejection instruction.